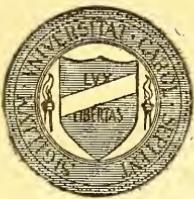


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ATLANTIC, TENNESSEE AND OHIO RAIL ROAD.

A Bill was introduced before the Legislature of North Carolina, during the session of 1852, for the purpose of chartering the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road company. This road was designed to extend from the Central Rail Road in North Carolina to the State line, upon the Watauga River, in the direction of Jonesborough, Tennessee; and was intended to connect both with Charlotte and Salisbury. Beyond the limits of North Carolina, companies had been already chartered in other States, to provide for the extension of this Road to the Ohio River. In our State, though a naked charter without any appropriation was all that was asked, it was refused, and the bill was defeated. I propose to show that the refusal of North Carolina to grant this charter was unjust and unwise.

It was argued in favor of refusing the charter, that if the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road were made, the counties through which it would pass would trade over it to Charleston, S. C. and would not trade over the Central Rail Road to the seaports of North Carolina; and that thus the prosperity of the seaports of North Carolina would be retarded, and the tolls upon the Central Rail Road would be diminished, so as to render it less profitable to the State.

I hope to show that it is not true, that the construction of the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road would retard the prosperity of the seaports of North Carolina, or render the Central Rail Road less profitable to the state. But suppose it to be true, and true for the reason alleged, that the counties through which it would pass would trade over it to Charleston, and would not trade over the Central Rail Road. Then, would it be just to those counties to refuse them the charter for this reason?

The East and Centre, in urging this argument upon those counties, are in effect saying to them:

"It is plain that the Central Rail Road, which opens to us the natural channel of our trade, and connects us with our own adjacent seaports, is intended for our especial benefit. And it is equally plain to us that it is not intended for your especial benefit; for though the Central Rail Road would connect Salisbury and Charlotte with our own seaports, yet we are forced by our present argument to admit that, if the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road were made, you would trade over that, to Charleston, and would not trade over the Central Rail Road. But, though we wanted the Central Rail Road for our especial benefit, we were unable, or unwilling, to bear the burden of constructing more than one-third of it; and we asked the State to bear the burden of constructing the other two-thirds.

"With becoming State pride and patriotism, you generally sustained us; and consented that, in addition to the other large sums expended in the East and Centre for internal improvements, the State should incur a debt of two million of dollars, in aid of the Central Rail Road, for the payment of which you were to be taxed equally with us. For this we owe you a debt of gratitude, redeemable, not in empty thanks and idle declamation, but in State bonds, issued to aid in the construction of a Rail Road.

"But, though this is true, yet if we aid you in the construction of the

Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road ; nay, if we even allow you, unaided by us, to make it yourselves, you will trade over it to Charleston. You would, indeed, do that for your own benefit. But what of that ? You would cease to trade over the Central Rail Road ; and thus it would become less profitable to the State. It is true that, as tax-payers, you bear, equally with us, your full share of the burden of this Central Rail Road, intended for our especial benefit. But we want more of you. We wish to prevent you from trading to Charleston, which, we are forced by our argument to admit, is your natural market ; and to secure your trade upon the Central Rail Road, to your disadvantage, as we in effect admit, in order that, at your expense, its tolls may be increased, and the prosperity of our seaports promoted.

" Thus you will not only, as tax-payers, bear your full share of the burden of the Central Rail Road, which we admit, by our argument, to have been intended for our especial benefit ; but you will, as toll payer, also, relieve us as much as we can make you, of our part of the burden. By this arrangement we will secure to ourselves the big end of the profit, while you will have to carry the heavy end of the burden.

" This is so obvious to our intelligence, and so tempting to our cupidity, that, although we owe you a debt of gratitude redeemable in a Rail Road, yet we would not only refuse to aid you in the construction of the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road, if you had the temerity to ask it ; but we will deny you even a naked Charter for it. We will not even let you build your own Road with your own money. We will force you to trade over the Central Rail Road."

Such is the argument, in a different dress, but in substance unchanged. If, in its new dress, its injustice seems somewhat more glaring, it is no more gross.

But how can it be true, as urged in this argument against the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road, that its construction would tend to divert the trade of those counties through which it would pass, from the Seaboard of North Carolina to the City of Charleston ? Charlotte and Salisbury are already, by means of the Charlotte and Columbia Rail Road and the Central Rail Road, in connexion with Charleston as well as with our own seaboard. The people of the counties through which the Atlantic Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road would pass, already trade to Charlotte and Salisbury, with which it proposes to connect them. Arrived at those points, they find themselves in connexion by Rail Road with Charleston, as well as with our own seaboard, and possessed of the entire liberty of trading with either. If they find it to their interest to trade to the seaboard of North Carolina, they may do so. If on the other hand, they find it to their interest to trade to Charleston, they may do so. The Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road would nearly enable them to arrive at Salisbury and Charlotte with greater facility ; but those places would be made no nearer to, or more closely connected with Charleston, and no further from our seaboard than they are now.

It is clear, then, that the construction of the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road would not tend to divert the trade of the counties through which it would pass, from the seaboard of North Carolina to the City of Charleston ; but that its effect, on the contrary, would be merely to facilitate the trade of those counties to the towns of Salisbury and Charlotte, where they already find themselves in connection by Rail Road both with our own seaboard and with Charleston ; connections which have been effected through the previous Legislation of our own State, the one with Charleston, first.

It is assumed, as a fundamental principle, in this argument against the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road, that it is injurious to North Carolina to connect interior portions of the State by Rail Road with seaports in adjacent States, so as to facilitate the trade between them. Is this principle true? If so, North Carolina owes a heavy debt of gratitude to the opponents of the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road, for exposing an error which has hitherto affected much of her Legislation on the subject of Rail Roads.

She has heretofore chartered the North and South Carolina R. Road, the Raleigh and Columbia R. Road, the Louisville, Cincinnati and Charleston R. Road, the Tennessee River R. Road, the Charleston, Blue Ridge and Chattanooga R. Road, &c.; all designed to connect interior portions of the State with Charleston. And she has with equal facility granted Charters for R. Roads to be extended across her northern boundary to the seaports of Virginia. If all this Legislation is erroneous, then truly North Carolina has adhered very blindly to the error of her ways; until at length the opponents of the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road have enlightened her counsels.

And if this Legislation is erroneous for the reason alleged, there would seem to be a similar error of equal magnitude involved in much of the same Legislation; to wit, the error of permitting rail roads to be extended from the seaports of adjoining States, across our territory, to the interior of other States. It is apparent, for example, that Charleston is endeavoring to extend her rail road connections to the Ohio, and to secure a portion of the vast commerce of the North West. But so much of this commerce as finds its way through the Cumberland Gap, the great gate way of the Cumberland Mountains, in order to reach Charleston by rail road, is now forced for want of a direct rail road through North Carolina, to make an awkward bend towards the South West, and pour its full tide down the valley of the East Tennessee and across the wide domain of Georgia.

And yet when it was proposed by the Charter of the Charleston, Blue Ridge and Chattanooga Rail Road, to open a more direct channel for the rich tide of this commerce, by the Hiwassee River and Rabun Gap route, North Carolina was blind enough, in the estimation of the opponents of the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road, to grant the Charter. And when it was proposed, by the Tennessee River Rail Road, to open for this commerce a channel further East, and still more direct; North Carolina still grants a Charter. And when the friends of this commerce come still further East and ask permission to stretch the Louisville, Cincinnati and Charleston Rail Road, by the French Broad route, across a still larger portion of our State; even this does not open the eyes of North Carolina; and the Charter is granted. It is only when, by the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road, this vast and growing commerce at length seeks a transit across the whole width of our State by a route which is by nature the most favorable for the construction of a rail road, is the most direct between Charleston and the Ohio River, and at the same time connects most admirably with our own system of rail roads, and our own seaboards; that the scales of error at length fall from our eyes, and we suddenly become wise enough, guided by these sage counsellors, to refuse the Charter.

The human mind is so constituted, that it would not be unparralled, if some of the many authors and promoters of these various Charters should still contend that the error was not in granting them, but in refusing to grant the Charter of the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road.

Without carrying further the language of irony, it is surely manifest, from the examples cited, that North Carolina had not, before the refusal to Charter the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road, acted upon the policy of

prohibiting her Sister States from extending their rail road connections into and across her territory. Has any such prohibitory policy been adopted in the other States?

In the State of New York, a rail road and canal extend from Lake Erie to Albany, commanding the immense commerce of the lakes. Albany is no nearer to the city of New York, than to the rival city of Boston, in the adjoining State of Massachusetts. The State of New York might have prohibited to Boston a connection at Albany with her great Western canal and rail road, and a participation in the vast commerce which pours over them. Did she avail herself of this power of prohibition? By no means. But on the contrary, she invited Boston, through the breadth of a single county east of the Hudson, to unite herself with Albany, her interior, and the West. A neck of the territory of Pennsylvania extends to lake Erie. New York could not connect herself by rail road with the west without crossing this neck. Does Pennsylvania, under this strong temptation, adopt the prohibitory policy? No. But, on the contrary, she permits New York to extend her rail road into the west, along the shore of Lake Erie, across the breadth of a single county. Massachusetts is webbed by rail roads running from the seaports of adjoining States. The little state of Connecticut has six rail roads, a navigable river, and a canal, all running from her own seaboard across the whole width of her territory from South to North. Yet she permits two rail roads running between Boston and New York seaports, in adjoining States, to cross the entire length of her territory from East to West, one along her coast, and one through the centre of the State. New Hampshire has connected Portsmouth with Montreal by rail road; and yet permits Maine and Massachusetts, through opposite corners of her territory, to accomplish the same connection. Georgia, after a gigantic struggle to reach the Ohio and the North West, yet opens the way across a single county on the North East corner of her territory, that Charleston may stretch a parallel and rival road through the Rabun Gap to the Ohio and the North West. And it would be easy to multiply examples of the same spirit of mutual comity existing throughout the Union. And the mutual prosperity which has invariably flowed from the exercise of this enlightened liberality, proves that the States which are actuated by it are as wise as they are generous.

Yet there have sprung up in North Carolina a race of small politicians, who stand up with their eyes shut in all this blaze of light, and exclaim, that, if we connect our railroads with the seaports of Virginia and South Carolina, we tap the wealth of the State; we open her arteries, and draw forth the life blood of her prosperity; we drain her of her treasures, and pour them into the laps of Virginia and South Carolina; and so forth. But surely the people of North Carolina have intelligence enough to distinguish such light chaff from wheat; and to know that the benefits of commerce are mutual. It requires but little progress in mechanical philosophy, to know that action is accompanied with re-action; and it needs but little knowledge of the laws of political economy, to comprehend that the commerce between States is beneficial to each.

It might be well, too, for the advocates of this game of shutfast, to remember that it is a game that two can play at. He does not deserve the name of North Carolinian, who does not hope that we, too, will build up cities on our coast, and extend their commerce, and their rail road connections, over the Union. But how will Beaufort and Wilmington reach the North West and the South West, without crossing the territory of Virginia on the one hand, and of South Carolina on the other? It would seem a waste of time to combat the fallacy of a policy so absurd, if there were not to be found in North Carolina, many persons who advocate it.

There are also many persons in North Carolina who fall into an error equally fallacious, in believing that it would be disastrous to build rail roads in North Carolina, for the reason that there would not be business upon them enough to sustain them, and that their competition would render unprofitable the roads already made or in progress. And some may have joined in the opposition to the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road from fears of this nature. But to such persons we ask leave respectfully to suggest that they are perhaps behind the times; they are not posted up in their account of the progress of the age. North Carolina was stunned into a Rip Van Winkle slumber, in the shock of 1837; and it may be that these persons have not yet shaken off the drowsy influence of that stun. If so, it is high time that they should awake. Let these North Carolinians of little faith look around them, and observe the gigantic strides of rail road enterprise in the United States, for the last few years. And then let them compare the condition, and statistics, and resources of North Carolina, with the condition, and statistics, and resources of the sections where those strides have been made, and are making; and they will learn to entertain a more exalted opinion of the good old North State. Their doubts will begin to disappear; their hopes will grow bright; and they will learn to believe that the energetic and devoted patriotism of her sons may yet achieve for North Carolina a future of glorious prosperity. To encourage them in the effort, we will invite their attention to the consideration of a few facts and figures illustrative of the ability of North Carolina to construct and maintain a general system of rail roads.

The coast of New England, south of Portland, Maine, is of less extent than the coast of North Carolina. The interior is by nature less productive than the interior of North Carolina. The principal part of the commerce of this section of course centers at Boston. The commerce with the other seaports upon the coast, to borrow a few phrases from the opposers of the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road, besides being overshadowed by the vicinity of Boston, is tapped and drained, indeed, it might be thought altogether sucked dry, by the system of rail roads ramifying into every part of it from the great commercial emporium of the adjacent State of New York. Yet upon this portion of the coast of New England alone, besides canals and navigable streams, and in addition to all rail road termini at the great city of Boston, there are more than twenty-five other termini. Every county in Massachusetts and Connecticut can show within its borders, portions of two, three, four, or more railroads.

The American coast of Lake Erie is much less extensive than the coast of North Carolina. Yet there is a rail road along this coast, and nine rail roads and four canals, with their various ramifications, running from this mere lake coast into the interior.

Yet it has been less than thirty years since the first mile of rail road was laid in the United States; and these vast systems of rail roads, the unparalleled rapid development of which is the wonder and glory of the age, were commenced when rail roads were in their infancy and their success an experiment; and when the population, wealth and resources of the States over which they extend, were no greater, in proportion to the extent of their territory, than are the population, wealth and resources of North Carolina.

These facts illustrate the creative power of rail roads; and show that, instead of weakening each other, they build up, strengthen and sustain each other. And they prove to a reflecting North Carolinian that we, too, require and can sustain a system of rail roads which will extend its ramifications into every portion of the State, and send into her remotest ex-

tremities the life-giving flow of commercial prosperity. If the people of the North and West could do all this, commencing poorer than we are, and in the infancy of rail roads; why should North Carolina sit upon the stool of do nothing, ringing her hands in despair?

We will now compare some of the leading statistics of North Carolina, under the census of 1850, with those of the adjoining States of South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee, which are webbing themselves with rail roads running into every portion of their territory. We will add Illinois, so nearly equal to North Carolina in population and area, and now rapidly developing a magnificent system of rail roads. We will also add Missouri, which has lately commenced a general system of rail roads; and Iowa, infant frontier, and without a large city, a seacoast, or a lake coast, yet already commencing a number of parallel rail roads across her territory.

	N. Carolina.	S. Carolina.	Georgia.	Tennessee.	Illinois.	Missouri.	Iowa.
Population, -	868,903	663,507	905,999	1,002,625	851,470	682,043	192,214
Sq. ure Miles, -	50,000	29,000	58,000	45,600	55,405	67,380	50,914
Population to sq. Mile, -	17	23	16	22	15	10	4
Value of Real-and Personal Estate, {	\$226,800,472	288,257,694	335,425,714	201,246,686	156,265,006	137,247,707	23,714,638
No. of farms in Cultivation, 56,916	91,969	51,729	72,710	76,208	54,468	14,805	
Acres of Improved Land, 5,453,977	4,072,651	6,378,429	5 175,173	5,039,545	2,938,425	824,682	
Val. of Farming Imple- ments & Machinery, {	3,931,532	4,136,354	5,894,150	5,360,220	6,405,561	3,981,525	1,172,869
Value of Live Stock, 17,717,647	15,060,015	25,728,416	29,978,016	24,209,258	19,892,580	3,689,275	
Val. of animals slaught' d, 5,767,866	1,302,637	6,339,762	6,401,765	4,972,286	3,367,106	821,164	
Tons of H.ay, -	145,662	20,925	23,449	74,090	601,952	116,925	89,055
Bushels of Indian Corn, 27,541,051	16,271,454	30,680,099	52,276,223	57,646,984	36,294,537	8,656,799	
" " Wheat, 2,130,102	1,056,277	1,088,534	1,619,381	9,414,575	2,981,652	1,330,581	
" " O. ds, 4,052,078	2,322,555	3,820,044	7,703,086	10,987,241	5,578,079	1,524,345	
" Potatoes (sw't & Irish) 5,716,027	4,472,962	7,913,807	3,845,560	2,672,294	1,24,511	282,363	
" " Rye, 229,563	43,790	53,750	89,163	83,364	44,268	19,916	
Pounds of Rice, 5,465,868	159,930,868	38,950,691	258,854	—	700	500	
" " Tobacco, 11,584,786	74,285	423,924	20,148,932	841,394	17,113,784	6,641	
Gallons of Wine, 11,058	5,880	796	92	2,997	10,563	420	
Bales of Cotton, 73,849	300,901	499,091	194,532	—	—	—	
Pounds of Wool, 970,738	487,233	990,019	1,364,378	2,150,113	1,627,164	373,898	
" " Flax, 333	5,387	5,387	368,131	160,063	527,160	62,660	
No. of Manufacturing Establishments, {	2,523	1,473	2,786	3,099	3,030	482	
Val. of Cotton & Wool, {	855,092	748,338	2,293,794	516,934	206,572	198,900	13,000
Val. en Manufacturers, {	92,347	87,683	118,884	1,611,043	511,385	719,795	8,500
Value of Iron, " Home Made, {	2,086,522	909,525	1,838,968	3,157,810	1,155,902	1,674,705	221,292
Total, Cotton, Woollen, {	2,956,393	1,745,567	4,230,771	5,346,093	1,936,168	2,581,444	224,033
Tonage, Iron & Home Made, {	45,219	36,072	21,690	3,776	21,242	28,907	—
No. of vessels built in 1850, 2,681	—	—	683	—	1,691	1,353	—
State Debt, 977,000	2,061,952	1,828,472	3,352,856	16,627,509	922,261	79,442	25,000
Ordinary Ex. of Gov'm't. 115,000	131,000	165,600	125,000	110,000	—	—	—

In this table, the statistics of the fisheries, and of the turpentine and lumber business, three important sources of the products of North Carolina, in each of which she would surpass all of the States with which she has been compared, are omitted, not being accessible to the writer. And North Carolina is here compared with States, some of which have already advanced far in the work of internal improvement; and have received, in return, the increase made by the creative power of those improvements. Yet, even under these disadvantages, how do the statistics of North Carolina appear, in comparison with the statistics of those States?

With the smallest territory of any in the number, except South Carolina and Tennessee, she is third in the number of inhabitants; second in the number of acres of improved land; third in the aggregate value of real and personal estate; third in manufactures; foremost, and most rapidly increasing, in the all important interest of shipping; high above the average in the general result; respectable in every item; and hindmost in nothing, unless it be in the small cost of her government, and the lightness of her state debt.

If we study her undeveloped resources, they are magnificent. Her soil is rich; and, being abundantly supplied with well distributed and inexhaustible deposits of rich manures and fertilizers, it is inexhaustible, and capable of the highest cultivation. Her genial and comprehensive climate produces in perfection the staples of all the other States. Beneath her surface are already discovered exhaustless mines of gold, copper, iron and coal. On the slope between her lofty mountains and her seaboard, streams, larger than the Merrimac, flow over rapids where manufacturing cities may flourish. And their many tributaries in their rapid courses offer thousands of choice sites for manufacturing towns and villages. At Peaufort, on her coast, is a harbor of the first class, admitted to be the best in the Union south of the Chesapeake, and possessing a rare combination of advantages.

Now, how are these States, with which North Carolina compares in statistics so favorably, progressing in the construction of rail roads? Though they all have extensive inland navigation, they are all in the full career of constructing a general system of rail roads. South Carolina has a successful rail road in operation in nearly every district, and is taking steps for the construction of perhaps as many more. Georgia has nearly a thousand miles of rail road in successful operation, and is yet agitating so many more, that her system seems but to have commenced. Tennessee and Illinois are each webbing themselves with mighty systems of rail roads, which, when completed, will extend their ramifications into every county; and the construction of which is rapidly advancing. Missouri has caught the same spirit; and, at the last session of her legislature, voted millions for the construction of rail roads. Even infant Iowa has commenced the work of constructing, across the whole width of her virgin soil, three or four pioneer rail roads, to carry the locomotive in advance of the march of civilization.

How does the prosperity of North Carolina compare with the prosperity of these rail road making States? As the luxuriant vegetation of nature seems dwarfed, when placed by the products of a high cultivation; or as a stately ship, pressing forward with full sails, appears to retrograde, when passed by the more rapid motion of a swift ocean steamer; so North Carolina, though marching forward in her strength, and growing great, seems in comparison with the more rapid progress of her sister States, to recede and dwindle.

Yet North Carolina has reason to be proud of her statistics. They prove that, though she may be sleeping, she is a sleeping giant. Though underval-

ued at home and derided abroad, yet she is richly endowed by nature with the elements of prosperity; and, by the energy and perseverance of her sons, may yet be placed side by side with the foremost States in the Union.

Who, after comparing the statistics of North Carolina with those of South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Illinois and Missouri, can any longer doubt that North Carolina, too, can construct and maintain a general system of rail roads? Nay, who can doubt that, in this age of progress and enterprise, when the success of rail roads is no longer a matter of doubt, and when the cost of their construction has been so much reduced, and so great improvements have been made in their operation; and now that the rail roads of North Carolina would be fed and strengthened on every hand, by their numerous connections with the rail roads of South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee and Virginia; and when North Carolina, from her lack of internal navigation, is forced by necessity to build rail roads; who, in view of all this, can hesitate to believe that North Carolina can sustain, and will certainly construct, a general system of rail roads; that the spirit and progress of the age will inevitably force through its construction, in spite of every opposing obstacle?

Taking it for granted, then, that a general system of rail roads, extending into every part of the State, must and will be constructed in North Carolina, let us now revert to the subject more immediately under our consideration, and view the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road as a part of the general system of rail roads in North Carolina.

Were those who opposed the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Railroad, because it was proposed to give it a terminus at Charlotte, aware that Charlotte is nearer to Wilmington, on our own seaboard, than to Charleston? Yet such is the fact. The distance in a straight line from Charlotte to Charleston, would, if drawn in the direction of Wilmington, extend far into the Atlantic ocean. The difference in the distance by rail road would be still greater, in favor of Wilmington. For the rail road connection between Charlotte and Charleston is crooked and indirect, while the connection between Charlotte and Wilmington would be unusually straight and direct. By a fortunate conformation of its natural route, the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad already extends from Wilmington to Whitesville, in Columbus county, on the direct route to Charlotte. And from Whitesville to Charlotte, through the fine counties of Robeson, Richmond, Anson, Union and Mecklenburg, there is a direct and very favorable route for a rail road.

It is obvious, then, that, in the future development of the rail road system of North Carolina, one of the first and most important rail roads which will be constructed will be a rail road from Charlotte to Whitesville. This rail road will meet the Central Railroad at right angles, and will connect the most wealthy and prosperous portion of our interior with Wilmington, our most flourishing seaport. And North Carolina may well afford to foster the interests of Wilmington with an affectionate hand; for Wilmington deserves well of the State. Wilmington has done more to promote the improvement of North Carolina than all the other towns in the State; and, in proportion to her wealth and population, is, without any exception, the most liberal and enterprising city in the Union.

Wilmington is not only nearer to Charlotte than Charleston is; but it is a fact equally significant that Wilmington is nearer to Cincinnati than Charleston is; and is also nearer to Cincinnati than New York is. The Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Railroad would open a direct communication between Wilmington and Cincinnati; so direct, in fact, that it would be called an air line, or bee line rail road between those points. And, while South Carolina is lavishing millions to connect Charleston with

Cincinnati, North Carolina, thanks to the opposers of the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road, stands in the attitude of having refused a naked charter to a rail road stretching its whole length directly between Wilmington and Cincinnati.

It may be supposed by some persons that, although North Carolina is able to sustain a general system of rail roads, yet it would be useless to charter the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road, or a rail road from Charlotte to Whitesville, because the particular sections of the State through which they would pass would be unable to sustain a rail road. The statement of a few plain facts will be sufficient to refute such a supposition.

There are eighty-two counties in North Carolina, the average population of which is 10,596. The counties of Columbus, Robeson, Richmond, Anson, Union and Mecklenburg, through which a rail road from Charlotte to Whitesville would pass, have an average population of 11,000. The counties of Mecklenburg, Lincoln, Catawba, Rowan, Iredell, Alexander, Caldwell and Watauga, through which the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road, including a connection with Salisbury, would pass, have an average population of 9,256; which, in proportion to their area, is more than the general average of the State, most of those being among the smallest counties in the State. And these counties will be found to compare as favorably with the rest of the State in other statistics as they do in population.

In Illinois, the twenty-two counties through which the great Central Rail Road from Galena to Cairo passes, have an average population of only 7,158.

It thus appears that the section of the State through which the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road would pass, is superior in population and resources. This section of the State, also, owing to the variety of its soil and climate, exhibits, at each step, varying productions and mutual dependencies. The Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road would unite the fine regions through which it would pass, with their natural outlets upon the coast; would combine harmoniously with the other rail roads of the State; would penetrate the mountains by the most available pass, and would form the great channel of communication between our seaboard and the North West. In short, it would combine all the great advantages which men propose to attain by the construction of rail roads.

Beyond the limits of North Carolina, both in South Carolina and in the West, the liveliest interest is manifested in the success of the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road. Tennessee has made an appropriation, to aid in constructing the portion of it which will be upon her soil, of eight thousand dollars per mile. The East Tennessee and Virginia Rail Road company have even gone so far as to cause a reconnaissance to be made of that portion of it, in North Carolina, which lies west of the Blue Ridge. And the very able engineer in their employment has officially reported that it can be constructed at a cost per mile not exceeding that of the East Tennessee and Virginia Rail Road. From the Central Rail Road in our own State to the foot of the Blue Ridge on the East side, the route is every where of the most favorable character. The Blue Ridge itself presents the only formidable obstacle in the way upon the whole route; and, although the Watauga pass has not been subject to the test of an actual survey, it will certainly compare favorably with any other, and is believed, by those well informed on the subject, to present the most eligible route by which a rail road can be made to penetrate the Blue Ridge in North Carolina.

I have endeavored to show that the refusal of North Carolina to Charter the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Rail Road company was unjust and un-

wise. The facts adduced for that purpose are founded upon the substantial and ascertained basis of the past and the present. If those facts are true, and the inferences drawn from them sound, they merit the attention of North Carolinians, however humble the writer may be.

We have been led, in treating this subject, to engage for a while in the pleasing task of advocating a general system of internal improvements in North Carolina, and to allude to the advantages combined in the situation of Beaufort harbor. It will not be uninteresting in conclusion to consider more attentively for a while the importance of this harbor.

The harbor of Beaufort is spacious enough to accommodate with ease the largest commerce in the world. It is open at all seasons, and can be entered and cleared in all weathers. It is effectually secured, by the form of its coast, from blockade in time of war; and it is so entirely healthy and salubrious as to be a place of resort in the sickly season. Its entrance has twenty three feet of water at low tide, which is a depth sufficient to admit the largest merchant men and ocean steamers afloat. It is well land locked, and at all times affords safe anchorage. And yet it is so immediately on the ocean that it can be entered and cleared without a pilot; and vessels at sea, sailing upon the great highway of commerce, between our Northern and Southern cities, pass in sight of its wharves. Vessels from the South bound for Liverpool, and vessels from the North bound for the West Indies, pass over the same route. And what is most remarkable of all, Beaufort is so situated, with respect to the ocean currents and prevailing winds, that vessels from all parts of the Union, whether North or South of Beaufort harbor, sailing for South America, Australia, Asia, Africa, or the Mediterranean, pass near its entrance.

Such is the wonderful combination of advantages united at Beaufort Harbor. In the present state of the commercial world, the possession of these advantages justifies the belief that a great commercial city may be erected at that point. But there are great events now in progress in the commercial world, which will give to the situation of Beaufort Harbor incalculable importance.

Some of these great events, which will hereafter be looked upon as eras in the history of commerce, are the establishment of a direct cotton trade with the continent of Europe, centering at Genoa, or some other city, upon the Mediterranean sea; the settlement and civilization of Australia; the growth of a commercial republic in Liberia; and the rush of immigration, and formation of a mighty empire in the valley of the Amazon. If the vast commerce of these growing empires, and of Asia and the Mediterranean with the United States, must all pass by the entrance of Beaufort Harbor; and if that harbor is as near the heart of the great valley of the Mississippi as any harbor upon the ocean; why may it not be made the centre of a vast commerce? What but energetic action, guided by wise councils, is required, to give Beaufort a future of unexampled prosperity? As the grandeur of this possible future develops itself to the intellectual vision, the imagination is captivated in its contemplation.

But this great future, for Beaufort and for North Carolina, can only be accomplished by determined and untiring effort. Our Sister States are straining every nerve, to outstrip each other in the race of improvement. If North Carolina does not wish to be distanced in that glorious race, she too must exert her strength. If she will arouse her dormant energies, and enter resolutely into the contest, she has nothing to fear from the result. Let the watchword of her sons then, be, Action, Action, Action.

W. W. LENOIR.

Lenoir, April 14, 1854.

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